

The Health of Stevenage.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Mr. Peter R. Tarbet, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Medical Officer of Health for the Stevenage Urban District, has presented the following report for the year 1906:—

During the year the health of the district has been good with the exception of a widely spread epidemic of measles.

I regret to also have to report two cases of diphtheria, both of which proved fatal. I will deal with this matter more fully under "Infectious Diseases."

I have to report that 70 deaths of residents occurred during the year, of which seven were reported from institutions outside the urban district. Although the death-rate per 1,000 of estimated population is this year 15.5, against 9.2 of last year you will see by the annexed statistics that the large increase is caused mainly by deaths of people over 65, there being 31 against 12 of last year.

Of the deaths which occurred 15 were under one year; five were between one and five years; three were between five and 15 years; one was between 15 and 25 years; 15 were between 25 and 65 years; and 31 were over 65 years. Of the deaths over 65 years, eight were under 70; 13 were between 70 and 80; nine were between 80 and 90; and one was at the age of 94.

As regards the infantile mortality last year I was able to state that it was only 33.7 per 1,000 births registered, as against 57.8 of the previous year. This year 15 deaths under one year of age have been registered, as against four of last year, making the infantile mortality 133.3 per 1,000 births registered, the chief cause of death being inanition.

The birth-rate for 1906 is somewhat lower than the previous year, the births having decreased from 121 to 110, all the children registered being legitimate.

Infectious Diseases.—The total number of infectious cases notified during the year is 202, made up as follows:—Erysipelas, 8; diphtheria, 3; scarlet fever, 2; enteric fever, 1; chicken-pox, 4, measles, 184.

There were no fatal cases of measles during the epidemic, which was exceptionally mild, and undoubtedly brought from Hitchin and district.

As regards the two fatal cases of diphtheria, one of which occurred in Green-street and the other in Sish-lane, Dr. Fremantle, the County Medical Officer of Health, and I were both unable to prove the source of infection. The third case which occurred earlier in the year in the Baldock-road was notified to me from a London hospital.

Water Supply.—During the year the water supply has been a good and continuous one. I have to report that the fully-licensed public-house in one of the outlying districts, to which I referred last year, has not yet a proper supply. I understand that the matter was discussed by the Licensing Justices at the annual licensing meeting, and that something will probably now be done.

Isolation Hospital Board.—I beg to report that I attended two County Council inquiries at Hitchin as to the necessity of proceeding with the establishment of an Isolation Hospital for the urban districts of Baldock, Hitchin and Stevenage, and the rural district of Hitchin, and I now understand that the County Council have issued an order dismissing the proceedings.

Nuisances.—There have again been very few nuisances. The manure nuisance at the railway station was again reported, but on communicating with the Railway Company it was abated.

The nuisance caused by gipsies encamping on the Station Estate remains unabated.

I had hoped to be able to report this year that the Weir Pond had been filled in, but I understand that the negotiations between you and the copyholder and freeholders have fallen through.

On several occasions various drains have been found blocked or faulty but have, in all cases been put in order on the usual notices being served.

I have only to report one case of overcrowding which occurred in Providence-row and has been abated.

Cottage Inspection.—With your inspector I have inspected the cottage property in the district. A full and detailed report will be sent in shortly.

Premises under Inspection.—With your inspector I have inspected all the dairies, cowsheds, bakehouses, slaughterhouses and workshops, &c., in the district. At the present time they are all very satisfactory.

I have also to report that I attended a meeting in London to protest with the other medical officers of health in the county against the proposed Bill of the London County Council by which they would have power to inspect all the dairies and cowsheds in your district.

